

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2984

ANSWERED ON:15.03.2016

Forest Clearance for Projects

Hari Shri G.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the scheme/guidelines being followed for grant of Forest clearance with regard to public utility projects in the naxal affected areas of the country;
- (b) whether the said scheme/guidelines have been in operation since 2011 in 117 districts;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has extended the said scheme/guidelines to December, 2018 and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (d) 1. To expedite creation of public utility infrastructure in 60 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts identified by the Planning Commission for implementation of Integrated Action Plan (IAP) Scheme, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) vide letter dated 13th May 2011 accorded general approval under section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for creation of critical public utility infrastructure of 13 categories, specified in this Ministry's said letter dated 13th May 2011, by Government Departments involving not more than 5.00 hectares of forest land, in each case.

2. The 13 categories of projects covered under the said general approval are as below:

- (i) Schools,
- (ii) Dispensaries/hospitals,
- (iii) Electric and telecommunication lines,
- (iv) Drinking water projects,
- (v) Water/rainwater harvesting structures,
- (vi) Minor irrigation canals,
- (vii) Non-conventional sources of energy,
- (viii) skill up-gradation/ vocational training centers,
- (ix) Power sub-stations,
- (x) Rural roads,
- (xi) Communication posts,
- (xii) Police establishments like police stations /outposts /border outposts /watch towers, in sensitive areas identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and
- (xiii) Underground laying of optical fiber cables, telephone lines & drinking water supply lines.

3. The Central Government vide letter dated 16th June 2011 exempted the diversion of forest land in accordance with the said general approval from the requirement of compensatory afforestation.

4. The Central Government vide letter dated 10th December 2012 extended the said general approval to additional 22 districts identified by the Planning Commission for implementation of the IAP Scheme.

5. The Central Government vide letter dated 1st February 2013 extended the said general approval to all category of public roads and quarrying of materials used in construction of public roads.

6. The Central Government vide letter dated 17th May 2013 extended the said general approval to 35 LWE affected districts, from among the 106 districts selected under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which were not selected for implementation of the IAP Scheme.

7. The Central Government vide letter dated 5th March 2014 extended the said general approval to setting up of "Medical College" by Government Departments in 117 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts as per details given in this Ministry's letters of even number dated 13th May 2011, 10th December 2012 and 17th May 2013.

8. The Central Government vide letter dated 4th July 2014 extended the said general approval to projects involving diversion of forest land, not located within the protected areas, for construction of two lane public roads by Government Departments in 117 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, as per details given in this Ministry's said letters dated 13th May 2011, 10th December 2012 and 17th May 2013, irrespective of the area of forest land involved in such projects.

9. The afore-mentioned general approvals were valid for a period ending on 31st December, 2015.

10. The Central Government vide letter dated 25th February, 2016 extended the period of validity of these general approvals for a further period of three years ending on 31st December, 2018.
